

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2290

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 7189

FOR AMBASSADOR POPPER FROM STEDMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, CI, BL

SUBJECT: BOLIVIAN PRESIDENT'S REQUEST

REF: SANTIAGO 8855

1. GUILLERMO BANZER-OJOPI WISHES TO GO TO SANTIAGO TO MEET WITH CHILEAN POLICE AUTHORITIES TO ESTABLISH TO THEIR SATISFACTION THAT HE IS NOT THE GUILLERMO BANZER ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE MEDINA/LUNA TRAFFICKING OPERATION. HE WISHES TO HAVE THE BOLIVIAN NARCOTICS POLICE OFFICER WITH HIM TO PROVE TO HIS DIRECT PERSONAL SATISFACTION THAT HE IS NOT THE BANZER WHO WAS IMPLICATED. SINCE DEA HAS BEEN THE VEHICLE OF EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION BANZER WISHES TO HAVE THE DEA OFFICE IN LA PAZ ALSO DIRECTLY AND PERSONALLY PRESENT WHEN HIS NONINVOLVEMENT IS ESTABLISHED. HE IS NOT BEING ESCORTED BY BOLIVIAN POLICE AND DEA AUTHORITIES; RATHER, HE IS BEING ACCOMPANIED BY THEM FOR THE PURPOSE OF PARTICIPATING IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HIS INNOCENCE. HE ALLEGES THAT IT IS A MATTER OF FALSE IDENTIFICATION.

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2. IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT BANZER

HE TOLD ME THAT HE WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF US AUTHORITIES IN COOPERATION WITH BOLIVIAN POLICE WOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST HIS NEPHEW, GUILLERMO BANZER-OJOPI, IN DRUG TRAFFICKING. PRESIDENT BANZER TOLD ME THAT IF HIS NEPHEW IS INNOCENT HE WOULD LIKE THAT ESTABLISHED. IF HE IS NOT, THEN HE WOULD HAVE THE FULL FORCE OF THE LAW BROUGHT TO BEAR ON HIM. IT HAS NOW BECOME CLEAR THAT THE OTHER GUILLERMO BANZER WHOSE MOTHER'S NAME IS ABASTOFLOR IS IMPLICATED IN THE MEDINA/LUNA OPERATION. NEVERTHELESS, THE BANZER FAMILY FEELS THAT THE TRIP TO SANTIAGO IS A NECESSARY STEP TO CLARIFY THE NON-INVOLVEMENT OF BANZER-OJOPI.

3. I EXPLAINED TO BANZER-OJOPI THAT SO FAR AS I WAS CONCERNED THE MATTER WAS CLARIFIED BUT HE BELIEVES, AND PROBABLY RIGHTLY SO, THAT HIS VOLUNTEERING TO GO TO SANTIAGO AND CLEAR HIS HAME WITH THE CHILEANS, WITH DEA AND BOLIVIAN AUTHORITIES PRESENT, IS THE BEST POSSIBLE WAY EITHER TO EXPUNGE THE ALLEGATIONS ABOUT HIM FROM THE RECORD OR HAVE THE CLARIFICATION INCLUDED IN THE RECORD.

4. I AM CONVINCED THAT THE TRIP IS IN OUR BEST INTERESTS. I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT IT WILL HELP US HERE WITH PRESIDENT BANZER TO HAVE COOPERATED. WE ARE UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE TO MAKE EXACT IDENTIFICATIONS WHEN WE PASS INFORMATION ON TO THE BOLIVIAN AUTHORITIES. IN THIS CASE THERE WAS A MIX-UP AND WE SHOULD MOVE TO TRY TO CLARIFY IT. A MAJOR COROLLARY BENEFIT OF THE TRIP WOULD BE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE OUR DEA AND COLONEL TAPIA HAVE FURTHER EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION AND VIEWS WITH THE CHILEAN NATIONAL DIRECTOR, COLONEL FONTAINE. A POTENTIAL BENEFIT MAY WELL BE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RELATIONSHIP WITH BANZER-OJOPI, A RESIDENT OF SANTA CRUZ, WELL CONNECTED IN THAT CITY.

5. I TRUST THIS ADEQUATELY CLARIFIES THE MATTER AND I WOULD APPRECIATE ALL POSSIBLE HELP THAT YOUR MISSION CAN GIVE TO SAIC SEDILLO AND COLONEL TAPIA.

6. BEST REGARDS.
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